

DRAFT MEETING NOTES

THE MAYOR'S GREEN BUILDING TASKFORCE

Meeting #2

October 16th, 2003

The second meeting of the Mayor's Green Building Task Force (GBTF) was held on October 16th, 2003 in the offices of Brown, Rudnick, Berlack & Israels, generously hosted by task force member Joel Reck.

Welcome and Introduction

Joy Conway, Chair, Mayor's Green Building Task Force

Andrea D'Amato, Chief of Environmental Services

Updates

Procedures for Expenditures of Finance

We anticipate having some money to support the operations of this Task Force thanks to a challenge grant of \$30,000 from the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative Renewable Energy Trust, which we hope will be matched with \$70,000 from an anonymous local family foundation. (This is in addition to the \$100,000 from MTC for design and feasibility grants that will be made through the BRA.)

With respect to the operating funds, should they become available, we would like to have a very simple procedure for using the money in a timely manner.

Joy Conway has asked Joel Reck to serve as Treasurer, and he has agreed to do so. Routinely, Joel will be available to Joy Conway to consult on expenditures, and Joy will authorize them. If for some reason there is an urgent need and Joy is unavailable, Joel will authorize expenditures.

Sarah Zaphiris will keep track of expenditures and provide a running list to Joy and Joel so that each time there is a decision to spend money, we will know what we have already committed to do and how much remains to be spent.

If there is need to add another Task Force member or two to this process as assistant treasurers, we can do so in the future.

Is there any discussion on this procedure? Seeing none, the procedure was approved with a motion by Eytan Fichman, seconded by Dick Tinsman.

Communications and Marketing Strategy

We have met three times at staff level to discuss a Communications and Marketing Strategy with Meredith Baumann, BRA Assistant Director for Communications for Media Relations and Dave McLaughlin, BRA Assistant Director of Communications for Marketing. Between meetings,

Meredith and Dave have prepared a first draft of a Communications and Marketing Plan, which can be used to guide us at this point.

A major goal of the Mayor's Green Building Task Force is education of the general public and of a multitude of different audiences who need to know more, such as Boston's young people, public health experts, affordable housing advocates, real estate professionals, to name only a few examples.

We would like to see attention paid by the news media to the work of the Task Force as we go along and not wait until a report is ready for release.

We also want to see a website that people from here and across the country can use to obtain information about what Boston has already accomplished in its goals of energy conservation and leadership in green building development. The web site should make it possible for people to follow the work of the Task Force, so the site will be created early in our process.

To move the Communications and Marketing Plan from concept to implementation, it will be useful for Meredith and Dave to have access to financial resources that can help with identifying appropriate news media contacts, making plans for the web site, producing exhibits that might reach young people through libraries and schools. Meredith and Dave are working on cost estimates for such items that can become elements of the action plan.

Other Updates

Councillor Tobin held a public hearing on October 6th to hear about the City's accomplishments in green buildings and to listen to suggestions for further consideration. Testimony was submitted by Rebecca Barnes, Bryan Glascock, Barbra Batshalom, Joy Conway and many other speakers.

A request was made after the hearing for copies of written testimony to be provided to the chair and staff of the Task Force so that the information and many good ideas can be folded into our work.

Councillor Tobin said he will participate in the meetings of the Task Force wither personally or through his staff.

Following the last meeting, Joel Reck moved forward with locating an energy economist to advise the Task Force. That presentation will happen on December 18th.

PRESENTATION

State of the Art: Green Building Policies and Programs

The Green Roundtable

Barbra Batshalom presented an overview of state of the art programs, beginning with a national overview and transitioning into three in-depth case studies and ending with a distilled analysis of strategies useful for the efforts of the Mayor's Green Building Task Force. These transferable strategies were largely taken from Portland, Oregon; Austin, Texas; and Seattle, Washington.

Introduction

There is a range of green building programs across the country and around the world. These programs all have different histories, evolutions, target audiences, funding sources and stakeholders. The purpose of this overview is to present a baseline understanding of current practices, and communicate the power of green building programs in order to transform the marketplace. From this understanding, Boston can assess the potential of its own initiatives and build on lessons learned in other places.

The following overview starts with a big picture survey of all existing programs, and then focuses in on three case studies highlighting successful programs that have some relationship to Boston's context. The final step is a synthesis of transferable strategies culled from the review of all of the programs. These transferable strategies are the underlying principles of what makes a successful building program.

Overview

- 50 + programs across the country
- West coast + Texas, Colorado, Chicago, Missouri, Pennsylvania
- State, county, and city efforts
- Residential, commercial, both
- Private public partnerships
- LEED requirements

Programs run the gamut of organization and scope covering state, county and/or local geographic and political areas and including both private and public partnerships. Some programs focus on residential development; others work primarily in the commercial arena, while still others cover both areas.

Many programs have chosen to take LEED, the United States Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design standards, as their baseline green building requirement. Some cities choose LEED and then amend this national standard with emphasis on issue areas relative to their local environment.

Three case studies: Seattle, Portland, and Austin.

Seattle, Washington, Portland, Oregon and Austin, Texas have established some of the most successful and long-standing green building programs in the nation and for this reason have been chosen for a closer examination.

Green Roundtable has been collecting information on an ongoing basis for the past 6-8 months primarily through phone interviews and in-depth Internet research. The questions asked cover all aspects of the programs from initiation to outcome. The following topics were covered: history and goals, stakeholders, program logistics, program funding (initial and sustained), the process for program development, marketing and communications, program outcomes, and finally lessons learned. It is important to note that while the most available up-to-date information has been included in this report, the research is an on-going effort, with new information rolling in weekly.

See Case Studies Attached as Separate Documents

POTENTIAL TRANSFERABLE STRATEGIES

The following ideas have been compiled from the programs reviewed and represent possibilities for the Task Force to consider as it develops recommendations to the Mayor.

COMMON PROGRAM GOALS:

- Create a commonly accepted definition and language for sustainable building;
- A vision/message for sustainable building that will motivate people;
- Leadership and shared vision
- Policy and standards
- Analytical models
- Incentives
- Awards program
- Education and training
 - Increased awareness and understanding, and incentives have helped to increase demand for sustainable building services/projects
 - Providing industry professionals with information, tools, resources, incentives, and rewards that enable them to undertake sustainable building practices that could help to increase the supply of sustainable building services, products, and projects.

LEADERSHIP AND SHARED VISION

It is clear that leadership needs to come from key stakeholders. In the successful programs, the nature of leadership goes beyond a reliance on high-level decision makers, but is leadership that is heavily invested in creating a shared vision – within city staff and departments and with the private sector.

Collaboration, where appropriate, with state and regional efforts makes good use of resources and takes advantage of good work existing in different places. A good example of this in Massachusetts is construction and demolition waste recycling. The Commonwealth has been successful at coordinating public and private sector stakeholders to implement an aggressive action plan. This work has resulted in market shifts, leveraging supply and demand cycles that didn't exist previously. Boston can benefit from and support ongoing efforts and support emerging markets for new businesses within the city.

Establishing a baseline can be critical. Gaining an understanding of the limitations of current practices and seeking to improve upon them will go a long way in drawing support and interest. A good place to begin to develop a clear baseline is in the beginning and at the core, with a common understanding of values and desired outcomes among all the players at the table. Success can then be measured readily and early in the process. Many of the existing programs did not have clearly communicated methods for measuring success, which can be a detriment to the program.

Marketing and communication are essential aspects of the green building programs studied. Austin, for example, learned late in its process that a lack of marketing efforts was a barrier. When they began marketing, the success of their program increased dramatically. Marketing is critical not only to the general public, but also within departments of city government.

It has been shown that effectiveness of the programs in other cities over time depends on continual input and feedback. It will be important for the Mayor's Green Building Task Force in Boston to consider the duration and long-term effects of its recommendations.

Finance

Incorporating 'life cycle costing' into policies and actions can also be critical to success. Budgeting and financial decision making processes should be analyzed to see how current practice supports or detracts from the goals. New financial tools may be created as needed.

Information Resources

Resources for city departments and communities to access, as well as resources for the development of the program can be very helpful. Most of the programs had excellent web-accessible resources.

Demonstration Projects

Pilot programs and demonstration projects go a long way to garner public support and boost learning curve among city staff and the private sector. There is nothing like a real project to bring home the issues, challenges and opportunities of green development. Engaging staff in ongoing projects, even before a program is launched, will encourage their buy-in as well as stimulate a higher, more conscious level of input in the process of developing the program.

Existing Programs

Boston has many ongoing programs that relate directly to green development - both in construction and economic development. It will serve the Task Force well to examine these programs and work with them as further recommendations develop. Included in this internal analysis, a look at City operations and maintenance could prove a critical step.

POLICY

Guidelines for sustainable design and construction work as a benchmark and design tool for the marketplace.

Citywide policy and or ordinances that evolve from a strategic planning context are very effective. Other programs have had policies or ordinances such as: deconstruction and salvage ordinances, indoor air quality protocol, energy water efficiency upgrades on sale of commercial or residential – reduction of toxic substances, and green space.

Future code adjustments could be addressed through a separate Code Task Force with built in flexibility and intentional feedback mechanisms that are not cumbersome.

Integrating clear language about sustainable development in Requests For Proposals is a good way to bring the language of the City's goals to the project developer.

When the review and permitting processes support and enable policy the City can benefit. In the case of 'green' water management infrastructure – the City may benefit from a neighborhood scale

strategy, while the parcels are developed by individual developers. Permitting and fee structures could allow for alternative strategies – which can have much greater short and long-term financial benefit.

ANALYTICAL MODELS

Analytical models that will encourage, guide and assess the financial and performance comparisons of sustainable design and construction are important factors that could be identified, promoted and linked to policies and permitting. Life-cycle costing, for instance, has been shown to be invaluable in analyzing project feasibility and financial benefits over time.

INCENTIVES

Mortgages: Sustainable mortgages exist to build on energy efficient programs and have been the key to engage real estate appraisals and brokers in other cities.

Permits: The permitting process in many cities has proven to be the low-hanging fruit. By streamlining in this area, carrying costs can be reduced where performance-based permit pricing has been put in place.

Zoning: There are many creative ways to address zoning issues where appropriate. For instance, Boulder residential requires an increase in green requirements proportional to square feet of project. They are thereby meeting their goal of reducing impact, yet still affecting large-scale projects.

Green Team: The development of a green building ombudsman or a “green team” to expedite projects could prove to be of great use in Boston. Ideally the group would be composed of representatives from various city departments and they are charged to intervene early in the process before a formal review. Clear communication internally with decision-makers would be critical to avoid conflict and maintain certainty.

Tiered Rate Structure: A tiered rate structure for system development charges related to performance measure could work to reduce external development impacts.

Floor Area Bonuses: If a project is in compliance with green criteria, or if contributing to specific facilities or amenities valued by the city (i.e.: roof top gardens, water infrastructure) this can help a shift towards sustainable infrastructure.

Tax Abatement/Shifting: Consider tax abatement or tax shifting in line with long term strategic planning.

Green Building Fund: Partnerships with lenders and financial institutions to create a special fund that is in line with City goals.

Other programs have taken initiative to create city sponsored buyers club, green equipment lease programs, or partner with utilities and other sponsors.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Public and Private Sector Education and Training.

A curriculum and training program will help educate key sectors of the building industry on sustainable building and the shared vision for the City. Training sessions could be targeted at each sector and potentially offer some level of “free assistance”

A training program for the City Staff in each department that is tailored to their context and needs will also help prepare them for the shift in the type of incoming projects. Including a “train the trainers” program may be very useful to achieve this goal as well.

An effort to “mainstream” products or techniques that are not yet widely adapted could be developed, along the same lines as Chicago’s green roof program.

Developing partnerships with other existing or new training and education outreach programs could leverage support within labor unions, design, and construction management teams.

Development of a comprehensive public education and communication program, based on the shared vision, could be the way to build support for sustainable building with the general public.

Market assessment could also be accomplished through general outreach targeting the following constituencies: public officials, point of purchase, public schools, educational systems, neighborhood forums, incubators of green business, green business products.

AWARD PROGRAMS

Public recognition through awards programs that focuses on the sustainable, holistic approach to building projects could bring out healthy competition and feed into marketing efforts. Partnerships with other organizations with similar interests in the sustainability field could prove very helpful in developing and offering awards programs.

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

Strategic planning will be very important in the beginning phases of program development. A few of the most significant aspects to secure in the beginning are, an organizational “home” for the program and steady, secure funding sources for multiple years. One step to begin to address the question of a “home” for the program could be to assign a coordinator to lead the implementation under the guidance of a steering committee of public and private sector stakeholders. Multiple and diverse funding prospects should also be sought early on in program development, to coordinate the scope of the program with feasibility and begin to accomplish deliverables.

A program development committee could be charged with generating broader awareness and support for the plan, as well as identify potential participants as the program continues.

In terms of the actual program, it will be very important for the success and growth of the program over time to build adequate feedback mechanisms into the program. Deciding how and what needs to be measured up front will help gauge success and also be useful in seeking further funding.

Discussion Notes

Joy Conway opened the floor for discussion following the presentation with a reminder of the Task Force's mission: to produce a report for the Mayor by September 2004, that includes recommendations for promoting green building development in Boston's private sector. In order to help move us in that direction, Joy asked the Task Force to set the framework.

Task Force and Peer Advisory Group members in discussion following the State of the Art presentation offered the statements and questions bulleted below.

Financing

- Over-concern with the financing of green building can actually cause a block in the success of our programs.
- Financing needs to be very specific with sunset planned ahead.
- Putting too much of a focus on financing presumes that green building is more expensive, and it is not necessarily.

Education

- Small incremental growth is subtle, but fundamental to the success of a process-changing program.
 - The county of Alameda, California is a great example of taking the time to re-organize, re-think and re-design their process and structure, which means it is slow to get going but will accelerate more rapidly than other programs due largely to its thorough and systemic change.
- The citizens and city staff should appreciate what is going on already in the city.
- One of our jobs is to think about education in an articulated way; coherence in a curricular dimension that is building on lessons learned from the other programs.
- More information was asked for concerning models where there have been collaborations between cities and colleges, towns and schools.

Permitting

- Permitting is time and time is money that can be redirected into green building.
- Labels that give special treatment in permitting should be considered and work well.
- Internal communication is of utmost importance, with everybody on the same page the process is facilitated.
- We need to ease regulatory burdens, which will call for some adjustments. Simplifying codes goes over well, but amending would not. Semantics are important in the perception of the program.
- It is the perception of some architects that the baseline for building has already been set due to the Massachusetts building code. It is an important element in dictating the building that occurs in Boston. Codes are an important factor in determining efficiency.

Incentives: Carrot and/or stick?

- Whatever recommendations we come out with, let's make it a carrot and not a stick approach. Incentives were key in the other cities presented. Incentives will bring the green builders.
- Award, reward and incentive programs are necessary for the success of the program/report.

- Clarity of regulation/sticks is necessary. Especially when a large organization prepares to approach the City with development proposals. Any confusion in the process bogs things down and takes time, money and energy away from the goal of the building.

Smart Growth

- The State department of sustainable development is working hard to develop principles of smart growth, and we should include that in our discussion.

Questions from the Task Force

- Are there costs to the programs in other cities? A total budget?
- Looking at the needs of the City and the needs of the development community, how do we make the link?
- How do we tie policy and growth together? How do we regulate, support and sanction growth now?
- What does the City need and what should we be really looking at? What should our priorities be taking into consideration our current programs and building on them?

Next Steps

1. Compose a strong mission statement that identifies the needs/desires of the City. This would give us more direction on our recommendations.
2. Chapters:
 - a) At least one chapter on Funding Green Building in Boston will be included in the report. We have a lot of ideas for finance, but we need to strategically tease them out.
 - b) A chapter on Collaborations and Partnerships that pays attention to utilizing the existing programs and incentives, and collaboration with interest groups and organizations. For example, historic tax credits that incentivize the re-use of buildings and homes, the Dioxin Resolution currently being developed, etc.
3. Sub-Committees:
 - a) A sub-group on collaborations between schools and cities is interested in forming.
 - b) Formation of a Finance Committee was proposed.
4. Education of the Task Force on all existing City programs and policies related to green building. This should be a consolidated yet thorough compilation of all programs and initiatives, including those from the BPHC, BHA, BRA, Environment Department, ISD, etc.
5. Dick Tinsman and Barbra Batshalom, with the help of Bill Reed, will take a first pass at defining which cities would be most appropriate for Task Force members to visit.